

## HOW THE BLACKFOOT LIVED

203

buffalo and mountain sheep horn. Basins or flat dishes were sometimes made of mountain sheep horn, boiled, split, and flattened, and also of split buffalo horn, fitted and sewn together with sinew, making a flaring, saucer-shaped dish. These were used as plates or eating dishes. Of course, they leaked a little, for the joints were not tight. Wooden bowls and dishes were made from knots and protuberances of trees, dug out and smoothed by fire and the knife or by the latter alone. 415 [237] [321]

It is not known that these people ever made spears, hooks, or other implements for capturing fish. They appear never to have used boats of any kind, not even "bull boats." Their highest idea of navigation was to lash together a few sticks or logs, on which to transport their possessions across a river. 411 501 •

Red, brown, yellow, and white paints were made by burning clays of these colors, which were then pulverized and mixed with a little grease. Black paint was made of charred wood. 386

Bags and sacks were made of parfleche, usually ornamented with buckskin fringe, and painted with various designs in bright colors. Figures having sharp angles are most common. 415 [531]

The diet of the Blackfeet was more varied than one would think. Large quantities of sarvis berries (*Amelanchier alnifolia*) were gathered whenever there was a crop (which occurs every other year), dried, and stored for future use. These were gathered by women, who collected the branches laden with ripe fruit, and beat them over a robe spread upon the ground. Choke-cherries were also gathered when ripe, and pounded up, stones and all. A bushel of the fruit, after being pounded up and dried, was reduced to a very small quantity. This food was sometimes eaten by itself, but more often was used to flavor soups and to mix with pemmican. Bull berries (*Shepherdia argentea*) were a favorite 262 222 [137] [251] [137] [251] [137]

THE BLACKFEET

[ca. 1700]

121 ticipation in the white man's fur trade. When elderly Blackfoot  
[173] Indians refer to this pre-horse period they commonly identify it  
by the expression, "When we had only dogs for moving camp."  
Let us simply refer to that time as "dog days."

175 No white man visited the Blackfeet in dog days, so we have  
no contemporary descriptions of their life in those times. Nevertheless, we need not rely entirely upon Blackfoot traditions to gain a general impression of their life in dog days.

David Thompson, an intelligent, inquisitive fur trader, spent the winter of 1787-88 in a Piegan village in present southern Alberta. There were aged men in that Indian camp who recalled from personal experience tribal life in dog days. When Thompson sought to determine the origin of these Indians, they "always pointed out the North West as the place they came from, and their progress has always been to the southwest. Since the Traders came to the Saskatchewan River, this has been their course and progress for the distance of four hundred miles from the Eagle Hills to the Mountains near the Missouri but this rapid advance may be mostly attributed to their being armed with guns and iron weapons." Thompson's elderly informants made it clear that in their youth the Blackfeet possessed no firearms and neither horses nor canoes.<sup>6</sup> They were nomads who hunted game and fought enemy tribesmen with primitive weapons of their own manufacture. They traveled overland on foot. Their only domesticated animal was the dog.

So we may picture those aboriginal Blackfoot Indians living in the valley of the North Saskatchewan near the Eagle Hills in the early years of the eighteenth century, just before the dawn of history in that region. North of that great eastward-flowing river was the coniferous forest. The Blackfoot homeland lay south of that thickly wooded area in a country of grassy prairies broken by forested hills, timbered river valleys, and lakes of different sizes. Here the primitive Blackfeet found the necessities of life—wild game, wild plant foods, water, and firewood.

<sup>6</sup> David Thompson, *David Thompson's Narrative of his Explorations in Western America, 1784-1812*, 328-34, 348.

[ca. 1725-1800]

THE WONDERS OF NAPIKWAN

To this trader<sup>A</sup> who had known Indians as travelers on foot or by canoe, nothing in the life of the strangers was quite as fascinating as their use of horses. He called their mounts "fine tractable animals, lively and clean made, about 14 hands high." The Indians picketed their horses with buffalo-skin lines to stakes driven in the ground near their lodges and hobbled them when turned out to graze. Their riding gear consisted of "hair halters, Buffalo skin pads, & stirrups of the same." Hendry welcomed an opportunity to accompany a small party on a buffalo hunt. He observed, "They are so expert that with one or two arrows they will drop a buffalo. As for me I had sufficient employ to manage my horse."<sup>9</sup>

Hendry did not identify these people by any name other than "Archithinue Natives," his rendering of the Cree term for the strangers. Possibly in his time the Crees may have used this general term in speaking not only of the Blackfoot tribes and their Sarsi and Gros Ventre allies, but of the hostile Shoshoni as well, for Hendry said they comprised several tribes at war with one another. He saw enemy scalps displayed on long poles near the Indians' lodges and met boys, girls, and women taken captive from other "Archithinue" tribes.

The white trader wintered on the plains. In spring he started on his long trip back to the bay. On his way down the Saskatchewan he met and visited four camps of "Archithinue" totalling 327 lodges. These may have been the same Indians whom he had visited the previous fall in the great camp of 322 lodges. At each camp he urged the leaders to send young men with their furs to trade at the bay. He had made the same plea at the big encampment in the fall. But the strangers always showed little interest in his proposal. They explained that they lived very well by hunting buffalo in their own country. They might starve on that long trip to the bay, for, they pointed out, they were unacquainted with canoes and would not eat fish.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Anthony Hendry, *York Factory to the Blackfeet Country. The Journal of Anthony Hendry, 1754-55*, 338, 350.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 338-39, 350-51.

THE BLACKFEET

[ca. 1850]

312 obtaining water in spring. At that season the water from melting snows collected in many depressions which dried out by summer time.

501 When the Indians had to cross deep streams or rivers on the  
505 march, they rolled up the sides of their lodge covers to form  
505 rude boats in which baggage and children were placed. Horse  
travois poles and tipi poles were lashed together to form crude  
rafts on which other baggage was ferried. Horses towed these  
improvised craft while men swam ahead with tow lines, guiding  
the way, and women pushed from behind. Horses whinnied, dogs  
yelped, and people shouted as the crossing was made. When  
the Indians reached the far side of the stream, they generally  
stopped for the day to dry their clothes and gear.

484 On a rainy morning the Indians usually did not try to move  
camp. If a heavy rain fell while the band was on the march, they  
generally stopped for the day. Other factors helped to determine  
both the speed of movement and the distance covered. Among  
them were the character of the terrain traversed (whether level  
or hilly, the number and sizes of the water courses to be crossed),  
the availability of game, fear of enemy raiding parties in the  
vicinity, and the desire to reach a trading post or a particular  
camping spot before nightfall.

492 A normal day's march was about ten to fifteen miles. This was  
fully twice the distance the prehistoric ancestors of the Black-  
feet could have made on foot carrying their meager possessions  
on dog travois and the backs of their women. A horse packing  
two hundred pounds on its back or hauling three hundred pounds  
on the travois could move four times the load of a heavily bur-  
dened dog twice as far on a day's march. So, animal for animal,  
the horse was eight times more efficient than the dog as a burden  
[182] bearer. The application of horse power to camp movement thus  
enabled the Blackfeet to accumulate more property and to move  
it faster and farther as well.

An average family of eight persons (including two grown  
males, three women, and three children) needed ten horses to  
move camp efficiently. They needed a horse to carry the lodge

726 at the hands of the Blackfoot as a result of neglect of adequate scouting precautions (Denig, 1953, p. 48).<sup>30</sup>

#### THE NOON STOP FOR LUNCH

484 On days when camp was to move the Blackfoot usually were up at  
264 dawn, packed, and on the march before 8 o'clock. They breakfasted before getting underway. At noon the chief called a stop for a short rest and lunch. Lunch generally was not a cooked meal but consisted of prepared meat, pemmican, or dried plant foods carried in rawhide cases by the women, suspended from the horns of their saddles. If possible, the stop was made near water. Otherwise drinking water was carried along in paunch containers. The flanking guard parties carried their own lunches and stopped to eat, holding their respective positions in relation to the main body. However, it was customary for the leader of each guard group to ride in to the main body to consult with the chief during the noon stop.<sup>31</sup>

#### CROSSING STREAMS EN ROUTE

505 Blackfoot bands carried no bull boats or other watercraft for use  
[501] in crossing rivers and deep streams while on the march. In the 1870's Bradley (1923, p. 257) described their method of crossing streams:

... they made a kind of float from the skin covering of the lodges, upon or within which their effects were placed, men, women, and children swimming, the warriors towing the floats by a cord held in the mouth. Such horses as were fit for that service were also made to do duty in transporting their riders. By these means a village of 500 lodges would cross a considerable stream within an hour's time.

[17] <sup>32</sup> The guarding of a moving camp by advance scouts, side pickets, and rear guard seems to have antedated the acquisition of horses by the northern Plains tribes. La Vérendrye wrote of the formation employed by the horseless Assiniboin with whom he journeyed to the Mandan villages in 1739, "The marching order of the Assiniboin villagers, especially when they are numerous, is in three columns, the scouts in front, the wings (extending back) to a good rear guard; the old and disabled march in the main body which is in the middle" (La Vérendrye, 1927, p. 317). The elder Henry's description of an Assiniboin movement in 1776, involving a camp of about 200 lodges and over 500 dog travois, however, makes no mention of side pickets (Henry, 1809, p. 309). Larocque's earliest description of the Crow (1805) mentioned their employment of advance scouts and rear guard, but no side pickets. Possibly the use of flanking pickets became more necessary after the introduction of horses increased the mobility of potential attackers. In earlier times, when enemies of necessity approached more slowly on foot, there may have been less need for flank protection. Nevertheless, flankers were employed to protect large camps on the move, even in La Vérendrye's time.

In the 19th century, use of side, advance, and rear guards was common to both nomadic and horticultural Plains tribes as well as to the Plateau peoples when moving camp on buffalo-hunting expeditions. The younger Henry (Henry and Thompson, 1897, vol. 1, pp. 340, 393) noted that the Hidatsa-Mandan employed this formation en route to and returning from their visit to the Cheyenne in the summer of 1806. This formation has also been reported as characteristic of the Crow (Marquis, 1928, p. 144), Pawnee (Dunbar, 1890, p. 328), Ojaga (Tixier, 1940, p. 166), Kiowa (Batter, 1875, pp. 185-186), and Flathead (Turney-High, 1937, p. 117).

[17] <sup>33</sup> Larocque's excellent description of Crow camp movement in 1805, points out that the Crow usually made a midday stop for lunch (Larocque, 1910).

1714  
191  
Kroeber (1939, p. 82) regarded the Blackfoot as "ancient occupants of the northern true plains or rather of the foothills of the Rockies and the plains tributary thereto." However, David Thompson, in 1787, found that the testimony of elderly Piegan (born and raised in the Pedestrian Culture Period) clearly pointed to that tribe's residence on the Saskatchewan Plains, near the Eagle Hills, some 400 miles east of the Rockies, in the early 18th century. It was not until after the Blackfoot tribes obtained both horses and guns that they pushed southwestward to the foothills of the mountains and the area that became their historic homeland (Thompson, 1916, pp. 327-329, 348).

Blackfoot traditions support this interpretation of the southwestward movement of these people in early historic times. This movement is also attested by traditions of the Flathead and Kutenai, whom the Blackfoot drove from the eastern foothills of the Rockies in present Alberta and Montana (Ferris, 1940, pp. 90-92; Thompson, 1916, pp. 304, 327-344, 463; Teit, 1930, pp. 316-321).

Assuming that the Piegan lived near the Eagle Hills and the Blood and North Blackfoot resided at no great distance from them to the northward or eastward in the period immediately preceding their acquisition of horses, it follows that the Blackfoot tribes were on the grassy plains well within the range of the buffalo at that time. This locality was north of the known limits of aboriginal maize cultivation in the Great Plains. Although the Blackfoot probably grew small plots of tobacco, it is improbable that they raised food crops. They were hunters of buffalo and smaller game and collectors of wild plant foods in season.

1714  
501  
481  
221  
433  
Thompson also found that elderly Piegan had "no tradition that they ever made use of canoes" (Thompson, 1916, p. 348). It appears clear, then, that the pre-horse Blackfoot of the early 18th century were pedestrians. Presumably they walked over the Plains, carrying their possessions by dog transport and on their own backs, in quest of buffalo, in warmer weather and retreated to timbered river valleys or to marginal forested areas in winter. The basic economy of the historic Blackfoot, characterized by dependence upon the buffalo for food, some clothing, and shelter (lodge covers), antedated the Horse Culture Period.

#### HORSE ACQUISITION AS A STIMULUS TO CULTURAL INNOVATION

231  
182  
The horse differed both physically and behaviorly from the dog, which had been the Indian's only domesticated animal and only beast of burden in the Pedestrian Culture period. This fact alone required extensive adjustments in the daily habits of Indians who undertook to acquire, breed, care for, and use horses.

EFFECTS OF FUR TRADE UPON THE BLACKFOOT

47

Saukamapsee was a Cree by birth, and as a boy of sixteen accompanied a party of twenty men led by his father to aid the Piegan against the Shoshone. 175  
726

"Our weapons was a Lance, mostly pointed with iron, some few of stone, a Bow and a quiver of Arrows; the Bows were of Larch, the length came to the chin; the quiver had about fifty arrows, of which ten had iron points, the others were headed with stone. He carried his knife on his breast and his axe in his belt. Such was my fathers' weapons, and those with him had much the same weapons. I had a Bow and Arrows and a knife, of which I was very proud. We came to the Peegans and their allies. They were camped in the Plains on the left bank of the River (the north side) and were a great many. We were feasted, a great war tent was made, and a few days passed in speeches, feasting and dancing. A war chief was elected by the chiefs, and got ready to march. Our spies had been out and had seen a large camp of the Snake Indians on the Plains of the Eagle Hill, and we had to cross the river in canoes, and on rafts, which we carefully secured for our retreat. When we had crossed and numbered our men, we were about 350 warriors (this he showed by counting every finger to be ten, and holding up both hands three times and then one hand) they had their scouts out, and came to meet us. Both parties made a great show of their numbers, and I thought that they were more numerous than ourselves. (411)  
(539)

"After some singing and dancing, they sat down on the ground and placed their large shields before them, which covered them. We did the same but our shields were not so many, and some of our shields had to shelter two men. Theirs were all placed touching each other; their Bows were not so long as ours, but of better wood, and the back covered with the sinews of the Bisons which made them very elastic, and their arrows went a long way and whissed about us as balls do from guns. They were all headed with a sharp smooth black stone (flint) which broke when it struck anything. Our headed arrows did not go through their shield, but stuck in them; on both sides several were wounded, but none lay on the ground; and night put an end to the battle without a scalp being taken on either side, and in those days such was the result, unless one party was more numerous than the other." (714)  
(411)

We can only speculate on the degree to which this battle was typical of pre-horse warfare. The points to be noted here are: 1. The weapons consisted of the lance and bows and arrows, both iron and stone tipped; 2. The shields were effective protection against even iron tipped arrows and were used to make a temporary wall of shelter between the warriors of both sides; 3. The absence of casualties, largely due to the use of the shield. (411)  
(714)

A few years passed, when Piegan messengers again came to the Cree for aid. The account of Saukamapsee continues: 175  
726  
539

"By this time the affairs of both parties had much changed; we had more guns and iron-headed arrows than before; but our enemies the Snake Indians and their allies had Misstutim (Big Dogs, that is, Horses) on which they rode, swift as the Deer, on which they dashed at the Peegans, and with their stone Pukamoggan knocked them on the head, and they thus lost several of their best men. This news we did not well comprehend and it alarmed us, for we had no idea of horses and could not make out 411  
231

<sup>141</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 328-329.

will appear in the historical sections of this report.

000

The Factor of Environment: It is no accident that the history of Indian occupancy of the valley of the Saskatchewan River and of the valley of the Missouri River should be inseparably linked. If one will but look at an accurate, modern physiographic map of the Missouri-Saskatchewan Region, such as Dr. Ervin Raisz' map in W. W. Atwood's Physiographic Provinces of North America (Atwood, 1940), he will recognize that the 49th parallel which now separates Montana from Alberta and Saskatchewan is a man-made boundary. In terms of physiographic characteristics this is one great region with no natural barriers to the movement of people from north to south or south to north. Neither mountains, nor rivers nor lakes separate that portion of the region lying north of the 49th parallel from the portion to the south of it. On the contrary we may note that one of the larger rivers of this region, Milk River, has its source in Montana, flows northward into Alberta and turns southward into Montana where it empties into the Missouri.

B  
G  
133

Throughout the greater part of their known history the majority of the tribes of The Blackfoot Nation were as much or more at home in the valley of the Saskatchewan and its tributaries as they were in the valley of the Missouri and its affluents.

B  
G  
131

Rivers were not important to these Indians for travel. They did not use boats or canoes. They traveled overland. But

B  
G  
484  
501  
000

[p.31]

000 on to it. For the chase men used light pad saddles of soft hide stuffed with hair.

- 501 Some Plains tribes made coracles of buffalo hide stretched on willow frames, with paddles to cross deep rivers, but the Blackfoot contented themselves with improvised rafts of poles and buffalo hides, which they propelled by swimming whenever they were compelled to take loads across rivers. The difficulty of swimming horses across wide rivers, especially the Missouri, seems to have had an important effect in retarding the spread of the horse in the northern Plains, and may in part account for the fact that the Blackfoot and other northern Plains tribes appear to have obtained most of their horses, in earlier days, from the Plateau peoples to the south-west.

- Warfare 231 The appearance of the horse not only made the successful hunting of the buffalo far easier: it permitted the increase in size and comfort of the tipi and the amount of household goods that could be transported. It also fostered, from the very manner of its introduction, a tradition of raiding which came to dominate Plains life in the two centuries of prosperity before the extinction of the buffalo. The use of these valued 'elk dogs' spread so rapidly largely because they were continually being stolen from the horse tribes by those who did not already possess them. Once acquired there was no strict limit to the number that could be maintained, for although the winter feed was poor, there was room for a great increase in numbers. Thus the acquisition of horses became a main objective of every able-bodied man. The Indians appear to have acquired very little skill in breeding, and the horse supply was dependent on the capture and taming of those that had run wild and on those stolen or obtained by barter from white men. The demand for horses was thus not easily satisfied, and systematic raiding of the horses of enemy tribes was the regular method by which young men acquired them. Horse raiding was the essential basis of Plains Indians' warfare in the historic period. We have no means of knowing the conditions in pre-horse days, but although it is by no means certain that the warlike habits of the Plains Indians are all of recent development, there can be no doubt that they received an enormous impetus from the appearance of the horse.
- 721 The status of an individual depended very largely on his [555] personal courage as displayed in raids, and elaborate conventions grew up as to what constituted brave deeds, for which the French trapper's term *coup*, or blow, has come into use.
- [411] The native weapons of the Blackfoot were the sinew backed bow and arrow and a circular shield of thick rawhide from the [714] neck of a buffalo hide.

side of Elk River was Crow country. We went up onto a near hill that was well grown over with juniper and other brush, and there awaited the coming of day. It came, and to the south of us, where Elk River comes from the mountains out into the plain, we saw rising the smoke of many lodge fires, of a big Crow camp, of course. 726

Leaving me alone on watch on the hill, my companions went down into the timber bordering the river and built a war lodge of poles and brush, and, when it was completed and a small fire of dry bark burning in it, I went down into it, Wolf Plume taking my place on the hill. I called upon Black Elk to assist me, and together we burned some sweetgrass, purified ourselves in the smoke of it, and, with the prayers and songs belonging to it, went through the complete ceremony of my Thunder Medicine; praying each of us, as the pipe went the round of our circle, for success against the enemy, and safe return to our People. [This is the common procedure with a war pipe. A regular Medicine Pipe would not be smoked at such a time.] That done, we rested there for the remainder of the day, keeping good watch upon the country from the hilltop, but failing to see enemies anywhere about. There were plenty of buffalo between us and Elk River; more herds were on the other side of the river. The Crows, we thought, must be making their killings of meat very near their camp. [342] [372] [793] [183] [782] [276] [778]

Came night, and we went on down to Elk River, built a raft of driftwood, placed upon it our weapons, clothing and various belongings, sacrificed to the underwater people some small presents, praying to them that we might safely cross their element, and so took to the water, holding onto our raft while swimming. We easily made the other shore, some distance downstream, dressed, and went on, following up the valley of the river. Morning had not come when we heard, far ahead of us, the dogs of the camp answering the howling of the wolves about it. We did not want to go on and raid the camp; we wanted first [501] [182]

BLACKFEET AND BUFFALO

726  
777  
[714]  
[411]  
[533] hidden in the timber during the day, was likely to be discovered by enemies, who would then look for its rider. Well, my visitors soon left. I slung to my sides my war sack and sacred, slender-cased, war bonnet, took my rifle, and started off upon the long, southward trail that I was to follow—my women, as I had ordered, singing the Wolf Song, good-luck song for the hunter, the warrior, as I left them.

721 Day was near when I arrived at *Osaks Ituktai* (Backfat Creek, Dupuyer Creek) and went into hiding in its brush for the day. Three mornings later I came to where Bear River joins Big River (Marias and Missouri rivers), and there, needing meat, I killed a deer. In the evening I built a small raft to keep my belongings dry, and, swimming and pushing it, crossed to Big River's south shore. I was then two nights in making Yellow (Judith) River, right where we Pikunis had camped and hunted four winters back. And sad were my thoughts; then there had been plenty of buffalo on the plains, plenty of deer and elk in the mountains. How happy we all had been there until some white soldiers arrived and said that they were come to move us back to our own country, to our agency on Badger Creek. Our chiefs told the soldier chief that we were, right there, in our own country; that twenty-five winters back, at the mouth of Yellow River, we had made a treaty with some of Our Grandfather's men, and they had put into writing the fact that from Elk (Yellowstone) River north to the Red Coats' country and from the summit of the Backbone (Rocky Mountains) between them and east to the mouth of Little (Milk) River was the country of us Blackfoot tribes. But the soldier chief said that our chiefs were wrong; that, many winters back, Our Grandfather had ordered that all of the country from Elk River north to Bear River was the country of the whites, and that we would have to pack up at once and return to our agency. So that we had to do, because we could not fight the many white soldiers who would attack us, kill off our women and children if we refused to go. So was it that we never again had buffalo; so was it that, for lack of them, many of our people died. And now there were no more buffalo; the whites had killed them all off. Close above where I lay hidden in the Yellow River brush were some white men's

• [501]  
[481]  
[136]  
648  
[131]  
[731]  
136  
178

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BLACKFEET

257

415  
323  
[17]  
[439] able to buy them of the traders and they are no longer manufactured. It is doubtful whether a single specimen has been preserved to the present day.

## KNIVES

412  
324 Their knives were made of flint, wrought into shape by a laborious process.

## WATER VESSELS

415  
237 Their water vessels were made of the paunch of animals, usually the buffalo.

## BOATS

501  
396  
[48] The Blackfeet never made boats of any description, any account to the contrary being erroneous. In crossing streams they made a kind of float from the skin covering of their lodges, upon or within which their effects were placed, men, women and children swimming, the warriors towing the floats by a cord held in the mouth. Such horses as were fit for that service were also made to do duty in transporting their riders. By these means a village of 500 lodges would cross a considerable stream within an hour's time.

## WAR CLUB, LANCE

411  
[17]  
[439] The Blackfeet used a war club of wood. They had no lances until they were introduced among them by the white traders.

## VEGETABLE FOOD

262 Their only vegetable food was such as grew wild in their country, consisting principally of a wild turnip, choke cherries, currants, gooseberries, strawberries, bull berries and a bitter white berry that grows upon the red willow; of the latter they were very fond. Service berries were the most common and most esteemed.

## SHIELDS

714  
[28]  
[237] Their shields were made of buffalo hide, about half an inch thick, by a long and tedious process rendering them as hard as bone, so that they would turn an arrow and

loot we could carry, and the rest we destroyed. We even broke  
up the lodge poles.

156  
726

#### WILD HORSE ISLAND

When the White people began to settle in the Flathead Valley, they discovered that a good-sized island near the southwestern end of Flathead Lake, about a mile from the south shore, had horses on it. The Whites named this island, "Wild Horse Island," but the horses that they found on the island were not really wild. The horses had been put there by the Kootenai Indians. Early in the spring, while the ice was still strong, the Kootenai would drive their best horses out to this island. They did this because they knew that as soon as the passes were clear, the Blackfoots would be coming across the mountains to see how many horses they could capture.

921

On the war party I am going to tell you about, there were eight of us. The leader was a Piegan named Strong. The others besides myself were, Eagle Head, White Antelope [this was Jim's translation; a more accurate rendition would be, "Cream-colored Antelope"], Elk Chief, Calf Robe, Taking-Fine-Gun [also called Good Gun] and one other. It is strange that I cannot remember the name of the other man, for he was one of the two members of our party that were killed by the Kootenai. But I am getting ahead of my story.

It was in the early summer. We crossed the mountains on a trail that ran down through where Kalispell is today [Kootenai Pass], and when we spotted some horses on the big island in Flathead Lake, we built a raft. [When describing the building of the raft, the Chief used the phrase, *Iks-ik-tukes-i-mish-ti-au-wax*. This describes the action of several men building a raft by laying several logs parallel to one another and fastening them together, but both Jim and I had trouble in translating the phrase because in contemporary Blackfoot the pronunciation of it would be quite different; today it would be, *I-ti-kún-a-aks-tush-ti-au*.] At first we pushed the raft along with long poles, but presently we could no longer touch bottom with the poles and so had to paddle.

721  
501

There were six of us on the raft—we had left two men on shore to guard our weapons and other belongings—and when we finally reached the island we set about capturing the horses we wanted. The difficult part was to catch the first horse,

921